

Less Stressful Customer Service



Good customer service is not only about putting your customers first. It is also about reducing your stress. These two goals are mutually compatible. When things go well with customers, you experience less stress. You can influence positive customer behavior more frequently than you may realize, rather than be subject to its accidental occurrence. Try influencing customers by: 1) Detaching from the emotional reaction of customers and never arguing with them. 2) Understanding that being successful with a customer is more important than being "right." 3) Use "active listening skills" which demonstrate you truly heard the customer. Active listening involves using your voice, your personal energy, nonverbal communication, and empathy to have a customer walk away with a positive experience, even if they didn't get what they wanted.

Office Wake-up Exercises



Feeling drowsy at work, but can't leave the office for a stretch? These isometric exercises might perk you up.

1) Stand with back against the wall, allowing arms to hang down at the sides. Turn hands toward the wall and press the wall with the palms, keeping arms straight. **2) Standing**, rise up on toes. Come down on the heels while raising both toes and balls of the feet. **3) Clasp** hands together close to your chest with elbows pointing out. Press the hands together firmly. Hold each position six seconds. Breathe deeply, and repeat. If you have health problems, always consult with your doctor prior to beginning any exercise regimen.

E-Cycling: Make Your Computer a Green Machine



Computers are getting cheaper. That means it can be tempting to purchase the latest technology and dump the old. Even if it is obsolete, think twice before tossing your computer or laptop in the trash. It contains toxic substances that are stacking up in landfills. Find out about electronics recycling in your town. Electronics recycling can divert more than 95 percent of these materials from our landfills, including lead and hazardous substances found in old PC equipment.

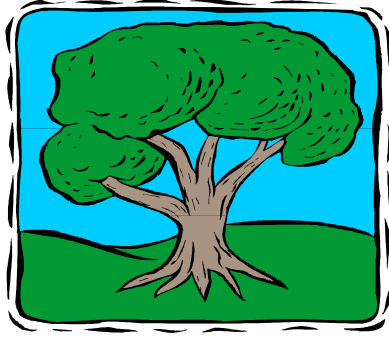
Follow the Two-Minute Rule



Can a task you have to do be done in two minutes or less? If so, do it immediately rather than postpone it because you don't feel like doing it now. All of us face a never-ending parade of daily tasks. Postponement often seems the easiest fix. But, too many temporary fixes eventually result in stressful crises. If a task can be done in less than two minutes, act on it. Live by this rule, and you'll accomplish more and procrastinate less. Test this time management tactic. Keep track of your outcomes, and discover how much you get done. You may be pleasantly surprised to see your productivity soar.

Aging Gracefully

No one likes the idea of getting older, but how you respond mentally, physically, and spiritually to aging has a tremendous impact on your quality of life. Many studies over the past decade consistently show that happiness actually increases with age. This shouldn't be surprising. With age comes wisdom, perspective, lowering of expectations, and greater contentment with what you have. Be proactive. Living a healthful lifestyle gives the best chance at preserving vitality. Get more sleep, exercise daily, eat right, and get annual checkups. Accept and adapt to inevitable limitations. Growing older slows us down, but it doesn't mean we must give up activities we love. Try moderating instead. Studies show that optimists live longer, more satisfying lives. Optimistic behaviors can be learned. Practice making your first thought of the day a positive one. Read inspirational quotes and affirmations at the start of each day. Try new things. Learning keeps the mind sharp and prevents getting stuck in a rut. Don't look back—stay in the creative mind. Regret is a destructive emotion. If your life isn't how you imagined it would be, forgive yourself for your mistakes and move forward with what you've learned from them. Share your history and what life has taught you with friends and family. Leaving such a legacy will be valued for generations.



Successful Team Building

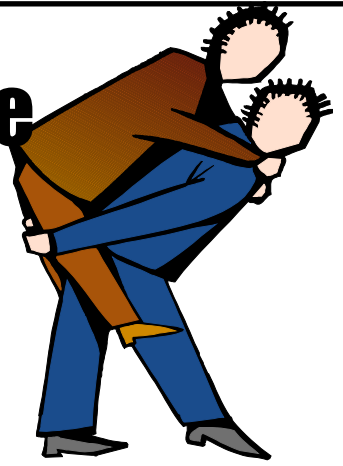
If you're scheduled to be part of a team-building activity, here are some tips to help squeeze the most benefit from this experience. 1) Don't skip out on the planning process. You'll be more willing to participate and will gain more from activities if you and co-workers collaborate beforehand about the agenda. 2) Following the activity, have a post-event meeting to discuss "lessons learned" and "insights gained" from your experience. 3) Brainstorming sessions during an activity can produce powerful results. Follow up later so you don't lose momentum, and keep the excitement going from your team-building experience. 4) After the team building event, consider having discussions 30, 60, and 90 days later to gauge and insure ongoing progress.



Building Workplace Trust

How would you rate your ability to trust others at work?

The ability to trust is a powerful asset for relationship-building and productivity. If you struggle with trusting others, you may find you only trust coworkers who—over time—have proved they won't let you down. Is it possible to trust others without this trial period? Harmful life experiences in our past can make it hard to risk trusting others, but a world of opportunity can open to you if you surmount this obstacle. Your employee assistance provider or a professional counselor can help you discover ways to overcome trust-related challenges such as: feeling unable to rely on others; feeling close to your team; feeling unsafe with others without good cause; questioning others' competence without reason; resisting taking safe risks; and finding it hard to believe what others say.



Getting Back on Your Bike

With the price of gas going up, you might be motivated to get back on your bicycle for a practical and inexpensive aerobic workout.

Be sure to refresh your skills by investigating bicycling rules of the road. Also, build confidence with some short-distance rides. Bikes keep changing, so take a trip to your local bike store for education on what's new. There are lots of gadgets and bikes for different conditions, and you can learn about what will work best for you. Remember to have the right air pressure in your tires. Investigate the safety status of your existing bicycle, especially if you're planning to head to the garage or basement and put your old bike back into service. You'll have a more enjoyable experience as you spin away.

